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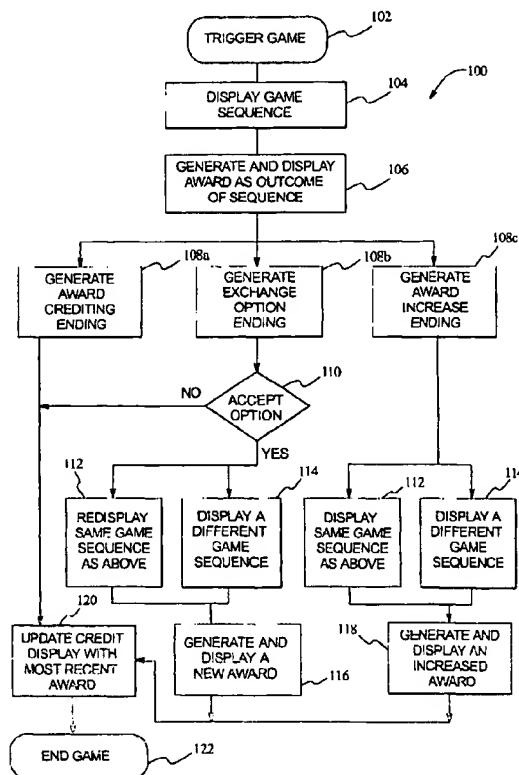
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(54) Title: GAMING DEVICE HAVING A BONUS SCHEME



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(57) Abstract: A gaming device having a bonus game including a preliminary award generated as an outcome of the bonus game and a plurality of different alternative ending sequences for the bonus game. After said preliminary award is generated, one of said alternative ending sequences is randomly selected to display to the player and the game employs such alternative ending sequence to determine a final award to provide to the player based on the preliminary award and the selected alternative ending sequence.



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GAMING DEVICE HAVING A BONUS SCHEME

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DESCRIPTION

15 The present invention relates in general to a gaming device, and more particularly to a gaming device having a bonus scheme with alternative ending sequences.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Known gaming devices include games that provide awards to a player after a player plays the game. The games typically display the award after its 20 generation. The games then provide the award to the player and end or move on to other game activity. An award or monetary win provides excitement and enjoyment to the player. Awards and monetary wins also attract passersby or persons observing a game in progress. It is widely believed that gaming establishments endeavor to maximize the attraction from gaming device wins 25 by placing higher win frequency games in visible areas.

Players become accustomed to bonus schemes in gaming machines after playing them a number of times. While players feel comfortable playing games with which they are familiar, players can tire of repetitious bonus schemes, especially those involving relatively little player interaction. A need 30 therefore exists to enhance the award issuance portion of a bonus game of a gaming device. A need also exists to add variety to at least a portion of a game, such that the player becomes familiar with the game and the game

provides variety, excitement and enjoyment to the player.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a gaming device having a bonus scheme with alternative ending sequences and, in particular, a gaming device which includes: (i) a processor; (ii) a bonus game controlled by the processor; and (iii) an award generated by or during the bonus game which includes one of a plurality of alternative ending sequences.

One of the alternative ending sequences is to provide the generated award to a player, which is the normal or known outcome of the bonus game. In this case, the game includes a game credit indicator or display that updates by at least one additional game credit via the generated award. This is generally referred to as a credit ending sequence.

Another alternative ending sequence includes increasing the generated award. The game preferably increases the award by displaying a bonus game. The game includes redisplaying the original game or displaying a different game. This is generally referred to as an award increase ending sequence or increasing ending sequence.

A further alternative ending sequence includes providing the player an option to exchange the generated award in the bonus game for another generated award. The gaming device provides an input device with which a player who is content with the generated award can keep the generated award. The gaming device also provides an input device with which a player who desires to risk obtaining a smaller award in exchange for a chance at a larger award can execute the exchange. As with the award increase ending sequence in this exchange ending sequence, the gaming device preferably exchanges the award by displaying a game. Again, the gaming device includes redisplaying the original game or displaying a different game. As alluded to, the game includes replacing the generated award with a larger, smaller or equal award.

The method for operating a gaming device having a bonus game with alternative ending sequences generally includes: (a) displaying a bonus

game; (b) generating an award as an outcome of the bonus game; (c) generating one of a plurality of alternative ending sequences such as an award crediting sequence, an award increase sequence or an award exchange sequence; and (d) executing the generated alternative ending sequence.

5 In the method, executing the award crediting ending sequence includes displaying at least one additional game credit in a game credit indicator or meter. Executing the award increase ending sequence includes redisplaying the original game or displaying a different game. Executing the exchange ending sequence includes: (i) enabling the player to accept or reject the option; 10 (ii) redisplaying the original game or displaying a different game; and (iii) replacing the generated award with another generated award if the player accepts the option.

It should be appreciated that the present invention contemplates other suitable alternative ending sequences. Generally, the present invention is 15 employed in bonus rounds where the player is in most instances guaranteed to win an award. However, it should be appreciated that the present invention could be employed in a base or primary game, wherein a player may or may not win an award. In this case, the alternative ending sequences occur when a player wins a base game award.

20 It is therefore an advantage of the present invention to provide an improved gaming device and method of operating the same.

It is another advantage of the present invention to provide a gaming device having a bonus round with alternative ending sequences.

25 It is a further advantage of the present invention to provide a gaming device having a primary game with alternative ending sequences.

Other objects, features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following detailed disclosure, taken in conjunction with the accompanying sheets of drawings, wherein like numerals refer to like parts, elements, components, steps and processes.

30

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figs. 1A and 1B are perspective views of alternative embodiments of

the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 2 is a schematic block diagram of the electronic configuration of one embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

Fig. 3 is a schematic flow diagram of one preferred method of operation 5 for a gaming device having a bonus game with the alternative ending sequences of the present invention.

Figs. 4A and 4B are tables having non-weighted and weighted alternative ending sequence entries, whereby the game randomly selects one of the entries.

10 Figs. 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D, 5E, 5F, 5G, 5H and 5I are front elevational views of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating a bonus game.

Figs. 6A, 6B and 6C are front elevational views of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating an award increase ending sequence, wherein the game redisplays the bonus game.

15 Figs. 7A, 7B and 7C are front elevational views of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating an award exchange ending sequence, wherein the game redisplays the bonus game.

Figs. 8A, 8B and 8C are front elevational views of one of the display devices of Figs. 1A and 1B illustrating an award exchange ending sequence, 20 wherein the game displays a new bonus game.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Gaming Device and Electronics

Referring now to the drawings, and in particular to Figs. 1A and 1B, 25 gaming device 10a and gaming device 10b illustrate two possible cabinet styles and display arrangements and are collectively referred to herein as gaming device 10. The present invention includes the game (described below) being a stand alone game or a bonus or secondary game that coordinates with a base game. When the game of the present invention is employed in a bonus 30 game, gaming device 10 in one base game is a slot machine having the controls, displays and features of a conventional slot machine, wherein the player operates the gaming device while standing or sitting. Gaming device 10

also includes being a pub-style or table-top game (not shown), which a player operates while sitting.

The base games of the gaming device 10 include slot, poker, blackjack or keno, among others. The gaming device 10 also embodies any bonus 5 triggering events, bonus games as well as any progressive game coordinating with these base games. The symbols and indicia used for any of the base, bonus and progressive games include mechanical, electrical or video symbols and indicia.

In a stand alone or a bonus embodiment, the gaming device 10 includes 10 monetary input devices. Figs. 1A and 1B illustrate a coin slot 12 for coins or tokens and/or a payment acceptor 14 for cash money. The payment acceptor 14 also includes other devices for accepting payment, such as readers or validators for credit cards, debit cards or smart cards, tickets, notes, etc. When a player inserts money in gaming device 10, a number of credits 15 corresponding to the amount deposited is shown in a credit display 16. After depositing the appropriate amount of money, a player can begin the game by pulling arm 18 or pushing play button 20. Play button 20 can be any play activator used by the player which starts any game or sequence of events in the gaming device.

20 As shown in Figs. 1A and 1B, gaming device 10 also includes a bet display 22 and a bet one button 24. The player places a bet by pushing the bet one button 24. The player can increase the bet by one credit each time the player pushes the bet one button 24. When the player pushes the bet one button 24, the number of credits shown in the credit display 16 decreases by 25 one, and the number of credits shown in the bet display 22 increases by one. A player may cash out by pushing a cash out button 26 to receive coins or tokens in the coin payout tray 28 or other forms of payment, such as an amount printed on a ticket or credited to a credit card, debit card or smart card. Well known ticket printing and card reading machines (not illustrated) are 30 commercially available.

Gaming device 10 also includes one or more display devices. The embodiment shown in Fig. 1A includes a central display device 30, and the

alternative embodiment shown in Fig. 1B includes a central display device 30 as well as an upper display device 32. The display devices display any visual representation or exhibition, including but not limited to movement of physical objects such as mechanical reels and wheels, dynamic lighting and video images. The display device includes any viewing surface such as glass, a video monitor or screen, a liquid crystal display or any other static or dynamic display mechanism. In a video poker, blackjack or other card gaming machine embodiment, the display device includes displaying one or more cards. In a keno embodiment, the display device includes displaying numbers.

10 The slot machine base game of gaming device 10 preferably displays a plurality of reels 34, preferably three to five reels 34, in mechanical or video form on one or more of the display devices. Each reel 34 displays a plurality of indicia such as bells, hearts, fruits, numbers, letters, bars or other images which preferably correspond to a theme associated with the gaming device 10.

15 If the reels 34 are in video form, the display device displaying the video reels 34 is preferably a video monitor. Each base game, especially in the slot machine base game of the gaming device 10, includes speakers 36 for making sounds or playing music.

Referring now to Fig. 2, a general electronic configuration of the gaming device 10 for the stand alone and bonus embodiments described above preferably includes: a processor 38; a memory device 40 for storing program code or other data; a central display device 30; an upper display device 32; a sound card 42; a plurality of speakers 36; and one or more input devices 44. The processor 38 is preferably a microprocessor or microcontroller-based platform which is capable of displaying images, symbols and other indicia such as images of people, characters, places, things and faces of cards. The memory device 40 includes random access memory (RAM) 46 for storing event data or other data generated or used during a particular game. The memory device 40 also includes read only memory (ROM) 48 for storing program code, which controls the gaming device 10 so that it plays a particular game in accordance with applicable game rules and pay tables.

As illustrated in Fig. 2, the player preferably uses the input devices 44 to input signals into gaming device 10. In the slot machine base game, the input devices 44 include the pull arm 18, play button 20, the bet one button 24 and the cash out button 26. A touch screen 50 and touch screen controller 52 are 5 connected to a video controller 54 and processor 38. The terms "computer" or "controller" are used herein to refer collectively to the processor 38, the memory device 40, the sound card 42, the touch screen controller and the video controller 54.

In certain instances, it is preferable to use a touch screen 50 and an 10 associated touch screen controller 52 instead of a conventional video monitor display device. The touch screen enables a player to input decisions into the gaming device 10 by sending a discrete signal based on the area of the touch screen 50 that the player touches or presses. As further illustrated in Fig. 2, the processor 38 connects to the coin slot 12 or payment acceptor 14, 15 whereby the processor 38 requires a player to deposit a certain amount of money to start the game.

It should be appreciated that although a processor 38 and memory device 40 are preferable implementations of the present invention, the present invention also includes being implemented via one or more application-specific 20 integrated circuits (ASIC's), one or more hard-wired devices, or one or more mechanical devices (collectively or alternatively referred to herein as a "processor"). Furthermore, although the processor 38 and memory device 40 preferably reside in each gaming device 10 unit, the present invention includes providing some or all of their functions at a central location such as a network 25 server for communication to a playing station such as over a local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), Internet connection, microwave link, and the like.

With reference to the slot machine base game of Figs. 1A and 1B, to 30 operate the gaming device 10, the player inserts the appropriate amount of tokens or money in the coin slot 12 or the payment acceptor 14 and then pulls the arm 18 or pushes the play button 20. The reels 34 then begin to spin. Eventually, the reels 34 come to a stop. As long as the player has credits

remaining, the player can spin the reels 34 again. Depending upon where the reels 34 stop, the player may or may not win additional credits.

In addition to winning base game credits, the gaming device 10, including any of the base games disclosed above, also includes bonus games 5 that give players the opportunity to win credits. The gaming device 10 preferably employs a video-based display device 30 or 32 for the bonus games. The bonus games include a program that automatically begins when the player achieves a qualifying condition in the base game.

In the slot machine embodiment, the qualifying condition includes a 10 particular symbol or symbol combination generated on a display device. As illustrated in the five reel slot game shown in Figs. 1A and 1B, the qualifying condition includes the number seven appearing on a number of reels 34 along a payline 56. It should be appreciated that the present invention includes one or more paylines, such as payline 56, wherein the paylines can be horizontal, 15 diagonal or any combination thereof. An alternative scatter pay qualifying condition includes the number seven appearing on a number of reels 34, but not necessarily along a payline 56, appearing on any different set of reels 34 a number of times or appearing anywhere on the display device the necessary number of times.

20

Alternative Endings

Referring now to Fig. 3, one method 100 for operating a gaming device having a bonus game with alternative ending sequences is illustrated. Upon a game triggering event, as indicated by the oval 102, the gaming device 25 displays a game as indicated by the block 104. In a stand alone game embodiment, a game triggering event may be the player's deposit of an appropriate amount of money and initial input or wager. For example, in a slot embodiment, pulling arm 18 or pushing play button 20 (see Figs. 1 and 2) triggers or initiates the game. In a bonus round embodiment, the game 30 triggering event is the player's achievement of a qualifying condition such as receiving a predetermined symbol or combination of symbols along a payline 56 (see Figs. 1 and 2).

The present invention is described primarily herein with respect to a bonus game where the player obtains awards such as credits, although it should be appreciated that the present invention can be employed in a primary or base game where the player may or may not win an award. In such primary 5 games the present invention would preferably be employed when the player wins a primary game award.

The gaming device preferably displays the game as indicated by the block 104, on one of the display devices 30 or 32 of Figs. 1A and 1B. The game may or may not include player interaction because certain bonus games 10 include player interaction and certain bonus games merely randomly generate an award for the player. An example bonus game is illustrated in Figs. 5A through 5I and discussed below.

The game generates an award for the player, as indicated by the block 106. The awards include but are not limited to game credits, a game credit 15 modifier such as a multiplier that multiplies a number of gaming device credits such as a bet, a total win, a payline 56 (Figs. 1A and 1B) win, etc. The awards also include representing other items of value such as a number of picks from a prize pool. Once the bonus game generates an award for the player, the game preferably displays the award to the player on the appropriate display 20 device, as further indicated by the block 106.

Instead of providing the generated award to the player such as automatically crediting the player's credit display 16 or other suitable indicator, the game of the present invention generates one of a plurality of alternative ending sequences, as indicated by the blocks 108a through 108c. Schematic 25 alternative ending tables, which the game employs to generate an alternative ending, are illustrated in Figs. 4A and 4B and discussed below.

One alternative ending sequence as indicated by the block 108a, includes the standard ending of crediting the player with the generated award. Executing this award crediting alternative ending sequence includes displaying 30 or updating at least one additional game credit in a game's credit indicator or credit display 16. More specifically, the game updates the player's credit display 16 by the amount of the generated award as indicated by the block

120. After crediting the player with an award, the bonus game ends as indicated by the oval 122, and the game then returns to the base game or continues with a different part of the bonus round. In a stand alone embodiment or in a primary game embodiment of the present invention, the 5 game enables the player to place another wager.

Another alternative ending sequence as indicated by the block 108b, includes providing the player with an award exchange option. This award exchange ending sequence enables the player to risk the currently generated award to try for an award upgrade, increase or enhancement. The award 10 exchange option includes replacing the currently generated award with an award of a higher, equal or lower value (e.g., more, equal or less credits) or a different type of award such as a prize. The element of risk forces the player to evaluate the value of the current award versus the award that the player may get as a replacement. The player must accept such award if the game 15 generates such a replacement.

Executing the award exchange ending sequence therefore preferably includes first enabling the player to accept the option or to keep the generated award as indicated by the diamond 110. The game alternatively includes automatically executing the award exchange alternative ending sequence (in 20 which case it is not an option). To increase excitement and enjoyment, the game preferably lets the player decide whether to accept the currently generated award or risk it for the chance at an upgrade, increase or enhancement.

If the player keeps the currently generated award by not accepting the 25 option, as indicated by the diamond 110, the game updates the player's credit display 16 by the amount of the generated award, as indicated by the block 120, and preferably ends the game, as indicated by the oval 122. If the player risks the currently generated award by accepting the option, as indicated by the diamond 110, the game either redisplays the same game provided in 30 connection with the block 104, as indicated by the block 112, or displays a different game than the one provided in connection with the block 104, as indicated by the block 114.

The game displays the same or different game on a display device. The award exchange ending sequence may or may not include player interaction. An example redisplay award exchange alternative ending sequence is illustrated in Figs. 7A through 7C discussed below. An example 5 different or secondary award exchange sequence is illustrated in Figs. 8A through 8C discussed below.

Either in the redisplay of the same game or in the display of a new game, the game generates a new award for the player, as indicated by the block 116 and replaces the previously generated award with the newly 10 generated award. The newly generated award is preferably the same type as the previously generated award such as a gaming device credit, however, as mentioned above, the award may be of a different type. Again, the value of the newly generated award includes being less than, equal to or greater than the previously generated award.

15 The game preferably displays the new award to the player on a display device, as further indicated by the block 116. After generating and displaying the new award, the game updates the player's credit display 16 by the amount of the newly generated award, as indicated by the block 120, and preferably ends the bonus game, as indicated by the oval 122.

20 A further alternative ending sequence, indicated by the block 108c, includes providing the player with an award increase. The award increase ending is preferably not an option for a player since players desire award increases. Executing the award increase alternative ending sequence therefore preferably includes automatically executing the award increase. The 25 award increase ending sequence includes upgrading or replacing the player's generated award with a higher value award.

The game preferably upgrades or replaces the player's generated award by either redisplaying the same game provided in connection with the block 104, as indicated by the block 112, or by displaying a different game 30 than the one provided in connection with the block 104, as indicated by the block 114.

The game preferably displays the same or different game on a display device. The award increase ending sequence may or may not include player interaction. A preferred redisplay award increase alternative ending sequence is illustrated in Figs. 6A through 6C and discussed below. A preferred different 5 or secondary award increase alternative ending sequence is discussed in connection with the Figs. 8A through 8C.

Either in the redisplay of the same game or in the display of a new game, the game generates an increased award for the player as indicated by the block 118 and upgrades or replaces the previously generated award with 10 the increased award. The increased award is preferably the same type as the previously generated award.

The game preferably displays the increased award to the player on a display device as further indicated by the block 118. After generating and displaying the increased award, the game updates the player's credit display 15 16 by the amount of the newly generated award, as indicated by the block 120, and preferably ends the game, as indicated by the oval 122.

The method 100 illustrates one method for operating a gaming device having a bonus scheme with alternative ending sequences. It should be appreciated that from the foregoing description, one skilled in the art can 20 modify the method. One such modification includes generating an alternative ending sequence at anytime after the game triggering event. That is, the present invention includes generating an alternative ending sequence directly after the triggering event, after displaying the game or at anytime during the game sequence. It should also be appreciated that different or further 25 alternative ending sequences may be employed in accordance with the present invention. The ending sequences of the bonus game are preferably randomly selected. Thus the player does not know which ending sequence the player will obtain.

30 Alternative Ending Sequence Tables

Referring now to Fig. 4A, an ending sequence table 130 includes the alternative ending sequences 132a through 132c previously discussed in

connection with Fig. 3. Specifically, the ending sequence table 130 includes the award credit ending sequence 132a, the award increase ending sequence 132b and the award exchange ending sequence 132c. The present invention contemplates more alternative ending sequences than are illustrated in table 5 130, as desired by the game implementor and mentioned above. The ending sequence table 130 includes each alternative ending having an equal percentage of being generated by the game.

Referring now to Fig. 4B, an ending sequence table 134 includes the alternative ending sequences 132a through 132c of table 130, wherein each 10 ending sequence has an associated likelihood of generation percentage 136. The ending sequence table 134 enables the game implementor to weight the ending sequences such that at least one ending sequence is more likely to be generated than at least one other ending sequence. Specifically, the ending sequence table 134 includes the award credit ending sequence 132a having a 15 slightly higher chance of generation than either the award increase ending sequence 132b or the award exchange ending sequence 132c, which are equally weighted. The game implementor sets the likelihood percentages 136 to any desired distribution, wherein the percentages preferably add to one hundred percent.

20

Example Game Having Award Crediting Ending Sequence

Referring now to Figs. 5A through 5I, one of the display devices 30 or 32 includes one example bonus game which is a property, item or product valuation game such as an antique evaluation game. The illustrated antique 25 evaluation bonus game is a bonus round of a slot machine. Fig. 5A illustrates that the simulated slot machine reels 34 (Figs. 1A and 1B) display three bonus symbols 140 along a single payline 56. The three bonus symbols 140 trigger the bonus round.

Referring to Fig. 5B, the game generates a plurality of antique items 30 142 from a table (not illustrated) and displays the antique items or selections 142 to the player preferably as selectable areas of a touch screen 50 having an associated touch screen controller 52 (Figs. 1A and 1B). Each antique item

142 is thus a separate area of the touch screen 50 adapted to send a discrete input to the controller upon the player's touching or pressing of the area. Alternatively, the bonus game includes displaying the antiques on a video monitor display device 30 or 32 and providing separate electromechanical 5 input devices 44 (Fig. 2).

Referring to Fig. 5C, the game randomly displays an actor 144. The bonus game includes providing an introductory audio, visual or audiovisual message by the actor 144, whereby the actor introduces himself or herself and the antique evaluation. The game prompts the player through a suitable audio 10 and/or visual message 146 to pick an antique item 142 as illustrated in Fig. 5D. The player chooses an item such as the violin item 142 as illustrated in Fig. 5E. The game displays an initial award of one hundred to the player.

Referring to Fig. 5F, the display device 30 or 32 illustrates a first or review of the violin item 142, which includes increasing the initial award to two 15 hundred fifty. The examination review includes providing an audio, visual or audiovisual evaluation 148, which explains that the award increase is due to no damage or missing parts.

Referring to Fig. 5G, the display device 30 or 32 illustrates a second or review of the violin item 142, which includes increasing the current award to 20 three hundred. The review includes providing an audio, visual or audiovisual evaluation 148, which explains that the award increase is due to a signature on back of the violin.

Referring to Fig. 5H, the display device 30 or 32 illustrates a third or review of the violin item 142, which includes increasing the current award to 25 four hundred fifty. The review includes providing an audio, visual or audiovisual evaluation 148, which explains that the award increase is due to the violin item having never been played.

Referring to Fig. 5I, the display device 30 or 32 illustrates that the game provides a suitable audio, visual or audiovisual total bonus message 150 30 indicating that the bonus game provides an ultimate award of four hundred fifty credits to the player. It should be appreciated that this game merely illustrates one of an infinite number of scenarios by which a gaming device generates a

bonus award for the player.

If the game generates an award credit ending (e.g., from a table such as table 130 or 134 of Figs. 4A and 4B, respectively), the game updates the credit display with the generated award of four hundred fifty. As stated above,

5 in most instances, after crediting the player with an award, the bonus game ends. After ending a bonus round, the game returns to the base game or continues with a different part of the bonus round. After ending in a primary game or stand alone embodiment, the game enables the player to place another wager.

10

Redisplay Example of Award Increase Ending Sequence

If the game generates an award increase ending sequence (e.g., from a table such as table 130 or 134 of Figs. 4A and 4B, respectively) the game redisplays the same game or a different game. Referring now to Figs. 6A

15 through 6C, one of the display devices 30 or 32 displays an example award increase redisplay ending sequence. The redisplay includes another antique evaluation having of a plurality of items 142 and an actor 144. In Fig. 6A, the game provides a message 152 informing the player to pick another item or antique 142. This redisplay ending sequence includes the player picking the

20 item 142, however, the ending sequence is not required to include a player input. Since the alternative ending sequence is an award increase, the message 152 does not present a question or option for the player; rather, the ending sequence begins by prompting the player and does not proceed further until the player picks an item.

25 Referring to Fig. 6B, the display device 30 or 32 illustrates the player's choice of a book item 142. The actor performs a plurality of examinations reviews on the item 142, as illustrated in Figs. 5A through 5I. The redisplay includes providing more or less reviews than in the original bonus game, however, the manner in which the bonus game increases and ultimately

30 generates an award remains the same. In Fig. 6B, the review increases the current award for the book or item 142 to one hundred fifty. The review includes providing an audio, visual or audiovisual evaluation 148, which

explains that the award increase is due to the book being a signed first edition.

Fig. 6C illustrates that the ending sequence provides the audio, visual or audiovisual total bonus message 150 indicating that the ending sequence provides an ultimate award of six hundred to the player. The award increase 5 ending sequence therefore increases the previously generated award of one hundred fifty by four hundred fifty. At this point, the game updates the credit display 16 (Figs. 1A and 1B) with the newly generated award of six hundred.

Redisplay Example of Award Exchange Ending Sequence

10 If the game generates an award exchange ending sequence (e.g., from a table such as table 130 or 134 of Figs. 4A and 4B, respectively), the game redisplays the same bonus game or a different bonus game. Referring now to Figs. 7A through 7C, one of the display devices 30 or 32 displays an award exchange redisplay sequence. The redisplay includes another antique 15 evaluation, wherein the actor 144 asks or provides an option to the player to have the same item 142, i.e., the violin of Figs. 5A through 5I, reevaluated. In Fig. 7A, the game provides an audio, visual or audiovisual option message 154 asking the player if the player desires a second opinion.

Since the exchange alternative ending is preferably an option, the game 20 enables the player to keep the previously generated four hundred fifty credits by picking the keep selection 156 (preferably an area on a touch screen 50 (Fig. 2) or alternatively an electromechanical input device 44), whereby the game updates the credit display 16 as described above. The game also enables the player to risk the previously generated award and try for an award 25 upgrade by picking the preferably simulated reject selection 158. The game includes informing or not informing the player that the newly generated award is potentially less than the previously generated award.

The redisplay ending sequence of Figs. 7A through 7C does not include a player input because the ending sequence employs the same item 142, i.e., 30 the violin, as in the original sequence of Figs. 5A through 5I. This alternative ending sequence is thus based on the player's previous input in the bonus game. The redisplay ending sequence alternatively includes a player input.

Referring to Fig. 7B and assuming the player rejects the previously generated award, a different actor 144 performs an analysis on the item, as illustrated in Figs. 5A through 5I. The redisplay includes providing more or less increases or decreases than in the original analysis; however, the manner in which the 5 game increases or decreases and ultimately generates an award remains the same. In Fig. 7B, the review includes providing an audio, visual or audiovisual evaluation 148, which explains that the award decrease is due to the signature on the back of the violin being fake.

Fig. 7C illustrates that the alternative ending sequence provides an 10 audio, visual or audiovisual total bonus message 150 indicating that the alternative ending sequence provides an ultimate award of three hundred fifty to the player. The award exchange alternative ending sequence therefore decreases the previously generated award of four hundred fifty by one hundred. The award exchange alternative ending sequence also includes 15 increasing or maintaining the previously generated award. At this point, the game updates the credit display 16 (Figs. 1A and 1B) with the newly generated award of three hundred fifty.

New Sequence Example of Award Exchange Ending Sequence

20 If the game generates an award exchange ending sequence, the game includes displaying a different game ending sequence. Referring now to Figs. 8A through 8C, one of the display devices 30 or 32 displays a new or different award exchange ending sequence. The new or different ending sequence does not include an antique evaluation; rather, in this example it 25 includes a bid sequence wherein characters 160 bid on the same item 142, such as the violin of Figs. 5A through 5I. The game provides the audio, visual or audiovisual option message 154 asking the player if the player would like to try for a bid at the auction as illustrated in Fig. 8A.

Since the exchange alternative ending sequence is preferably an 30 option, the game enables the player to keep the previously generated four hundred fifty credits by picking the keep selection 156, or to risk the previously generated award and try for an award upgrade by picking the reject selection

158. The game includes informing or not informing the player that the newly generated award is potentially less than the previously generated award.

The different or new alternative ending sequence of Figs. 8A through 8C does not include a player input, i.e., the ending sequence employs the 5 same item 142, the violin, as in the original bonus game of Figs. 5A through 5I. The new or different alternative ending sequence alternatively includes a player input. Referring to Fig. 8B and assuming the player rejects the previously generated award, a plurality of different characters 160 bid on the item 142, which is a different award increase or decrease mechanism than the 10 appraisals or reviews described in Figs. 5A through 5I. In Fig. 8B, the bid opens at two hundred, an amount less than the previously generated award amount of four hundred fifty and increases as the characters 160 bid up the price for the violin item 142. The bidding can stop short of the previously generated amount or surpass the previously generated amount according to a 15 random generation.

Fig. 8C illustrates in the video or audio visual message 162 that in the new or different sequence, one character has made a highest bid of six hundred, which is the player's ultimate award. The award exchange ending sequence therefore increases the previously generated award of four hundred 20 fifty by one hundred fifty. The new or different ending sequence also includes maintaining or decreasing the previously generated award. At this point, the game updates the credit display 16 (Figs. 1A and 1B) with the most recently generated award of six hundred.

If the game generates an award increase alternative ending sequence, 25 the game includes displaying a different ending sequence. It should be appreciated that the new or different ending sequence of Figs. 8A through 8C is easily adaptable for the award increase ending sequence. That is, in Fig. 8A, the new or different version of the award increase ending sequence does not include the keep selector 156 or the reject selector 158; rather, the game 30 automatically begins the bid sequence, wherein characters 160 bid on the same item 142, i.e., the violin of Figs. 5A through 5I. In Fig. 8B, the bid opens at the previously generated award of four hundred fifty rather than the lower

amount of two hundred, whereby the characters 160 can only increase the award as they bid up the price for the violin item 142. In this award increase ending sequence, the visual or audiovisual message 162 illustrates that the bidding increases the previously generated amount to the highest bid of six
5 hundred provided by one of the characters 160.

As indicated above, it should also be appreciated that the alternative ending sequence could, in accordance with the present invention, include an independent bonus game such as a match game, selection picking game, a selection picking game with a terminator or any other suitable game. This
10 alternative ending sequence may or may not employ the values previously generated in the bonus game such as the preliminary award.

While the present invention is described in connection with what is presently considered to be the most practical and preferred embodiments, it should be appreciated that the invention is not limited to the disclosed
15 embodiments, and is intended to cover various modifications and equivalent arrangements included within the spirit and scope of the claims. Modifications and variations in the present invention may be made without departing from the novel aspects of the invention as defined in the claims, and this application is limited only by the scope of the claims.

CLAIMS

The invention is claimed as follows:

5 1. A gaming device comprising:
a bonus game;
a display device adapted to display the bonus game to a player;
a processor in communication with the display device;
a preliminary award generated as an outcome of said bonus game; and
10 a plurality of different alternative ending sequences for said bonus
game, wherein one of said alternative ending sequences is randomly selected
to change the preliminary award displayed to the player, and the processor
employs said selected alternative ending sequence to determine a final award
to provide to the player based on the preliminary award and the selected
15 alternative ending sequence.

2. The gaming device of Claim 1, wherein the selected alternative
ending sequence is processor selected.

20 3. A gaming device comprising:
a bonus game;
a display device adapted to display the bonus game to a player;
a processor in communication with the display device;
a preliminary award generated as an outcome of said bonus game; and
25 a plurality of different alternative ending sequences for said bonus
game, one of said alternative ending sequences including a redisplay of said
bonus game, wherein one of said alternative ending sequences is randomly
selected, and the processor employs said selected alternative ending
sequence to determine a final award to provide to the player based on the
30 preliminary award and the selected alternative ending sequence.

4. The gaming device of Claim 3, wherein the selected alternative ending sequence is processor selected.

5 5. A gaming device comprising:
a bonus game;
a display device adapted to display the bonus game to a player;
a processor in communication with the display device;
a preliminary award generated as an outcome of said bonus game; and
a plurality of different alternative ending sequences for said bonus
10 game, one of said alternative ending sequences including a display of a
different bonus game, wherein one of said alternative ending sequences is
randomly selected for display to said player, and the processor employs said
selected alternative ending sequence to determine a final award to provide to
the player based on the preliminary award and the selected alternative ending
15 sequence.

6. The gaming device of Claim 5, wherein the selected alternative ending sequence is processor selected.

20 7. A gaming device comprising:
a bonus game;
a display device adapted to display the bonus game to a player;
a processor in communication with the display device;
a preliminary award generated as an outcome of said bonus game; and
25 a plurality of different alternative ending sequences for said bonus
game, one of said alternative ending sequences including an option to
exchange said preliminary award for a final award, wherein one of said
alternative ending sequences is randomly selected for display to the player,
and the processor employs said selected alternative ending sequence to
30 determine a final award to provide to the player based on the preliminary
award and the selected alternative ending sequence.

8. The gaming device of Claim 7, wherein the selected alternative ending sequence is processor selected.

9. A gaming device comprising:
5 a bonus game;
a display device adapted to display the bonus game to a player;
a processor in communication with the display device;
a preliminary award generated as an outcome of said bonus game; and
a plurality of different alternative ending sequences for said bonus game
10 including an award ending sequence, an award increase sequence and an award exchange sequence, wherein one of said alternative ending sequences is randomly selected for display to said player and the processor employs said selected alternative ending sequence to determine a final award to provide to the player based on the preliminary award and the selected alternative ending
15 sequence.

10. The gaming device of Claim 10, wherein the selected alternative ending sequence is processor selected.

20 11. A method for operating a gaming device, said method comprising the steps of:
(a) displaying a bonus game;
(b) generating a preliminary award as an outcome of said bonus game;
25 (c) randomly generating one of a plurality of different alternative ending sequences for said bonus game, said alternative ending sequences including an award crediting sequence, an award increase sequence and an award exchange option sequence;
(d) executing said generated alternative ending sequence to determine a final award to provide the player based on the preliminary award and the generated alternative ending sequence;
30 (e) providing the final award to the player; and

(f) ending the bonus game.

12. The method of Claim 11, wherein executing said award crediting sequence includes redisplaying said bonus game.

5

13. The method of Claim 11, wherein executing said award increase sequence includes displaying a different bonus game.

14. The method of Claim 11, wherein executing said award increase sequence includes increasing said generated preliminary award.

15. The gaming device of Claim 11, wherein executing said award exchange option sequence includes enabling a player to accept said generated preliminary award or exchange the preliminary award for another award.

16. The method of Claim 11, wherein executing said award exchange option sequence includes replacing said generated preliminary award with another award.

20

17. The method of Claim 11, wherein the method is provided to a player through a data network.

25

18. The method of Claim 16, wherein data network is an internet.

19. A method for operating a gaming device, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) displaying a bonus game;

(b) generating a preliminary award as an outcome of said bonus game;

(c) randomly generating one of a plurality of different alternative ending sequences, said alternative ending sequences including an award

crediting sequence and an award increase sequence;

(d) executing and displaying said generated alternative ending sequence to determine a final award to provide to the player based on the preliminary award and the generated alternative ending sequence;

5 (e) providing the final award to the player; and

(f) ending the bonus game.

20. The method of Claim 18, wherein the method is provided to a player through a data network.

10

21. The method of Claim 19, wherein data network is an internet.

22. A gaming device comprising:

a display device; and

15 a processor operable with the display device to:

(a) initiate a display of a bonus game sequence having an award outcome;

(b) initiate an alternative ending randomly selected from a plurality of different alternative endings including an award crediting ending, an award

20 increase ending and an award exchange ending;

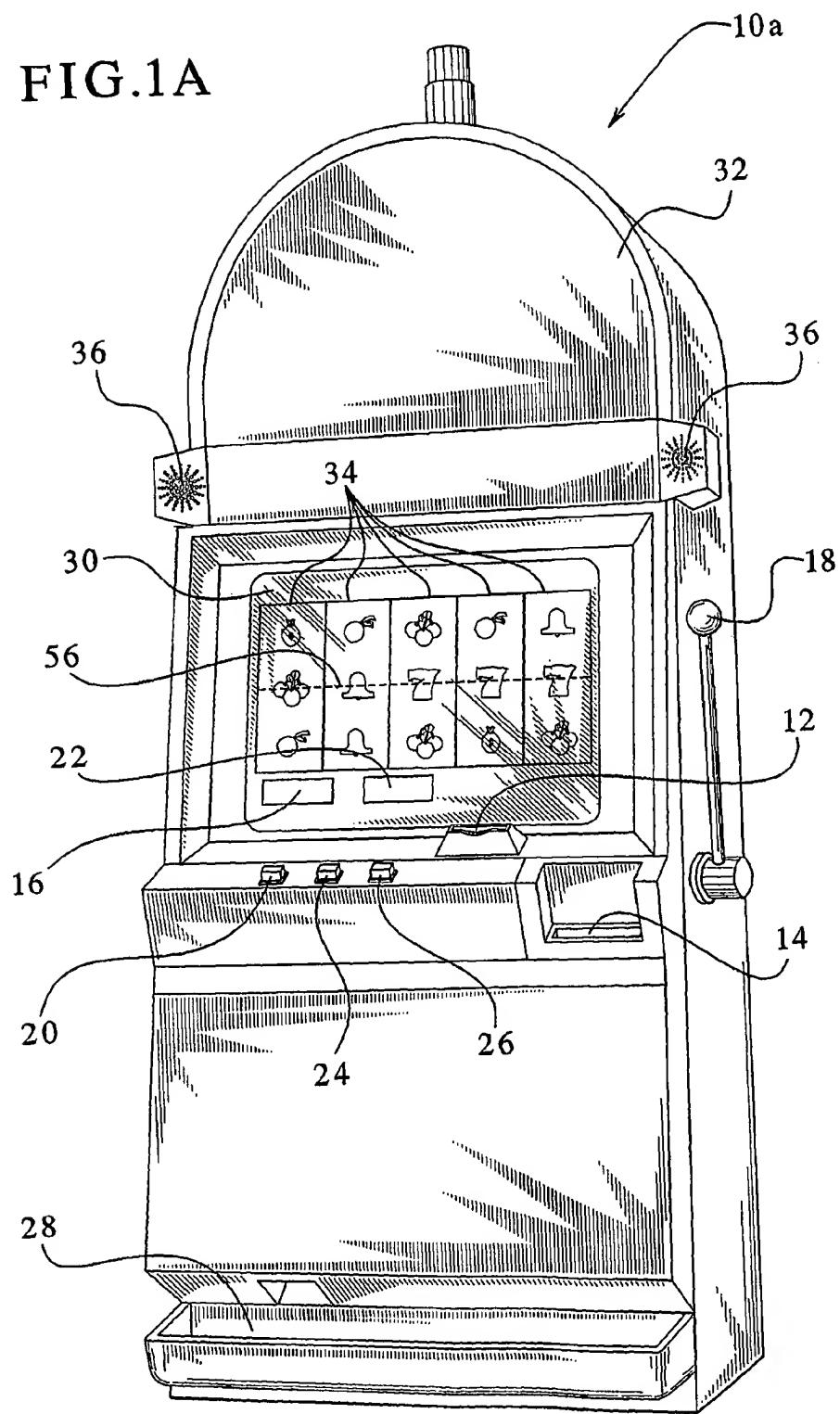
(c) direct a credit indicator update if said alternative ending is said award crediting ending;

(d) direct a display of an increase to the award outcome if said generated alternative ending is said award increase ending; and

25 (e) direct a display of an award exchange of said award outcome if said generated alternative ending is said award exchange ending.

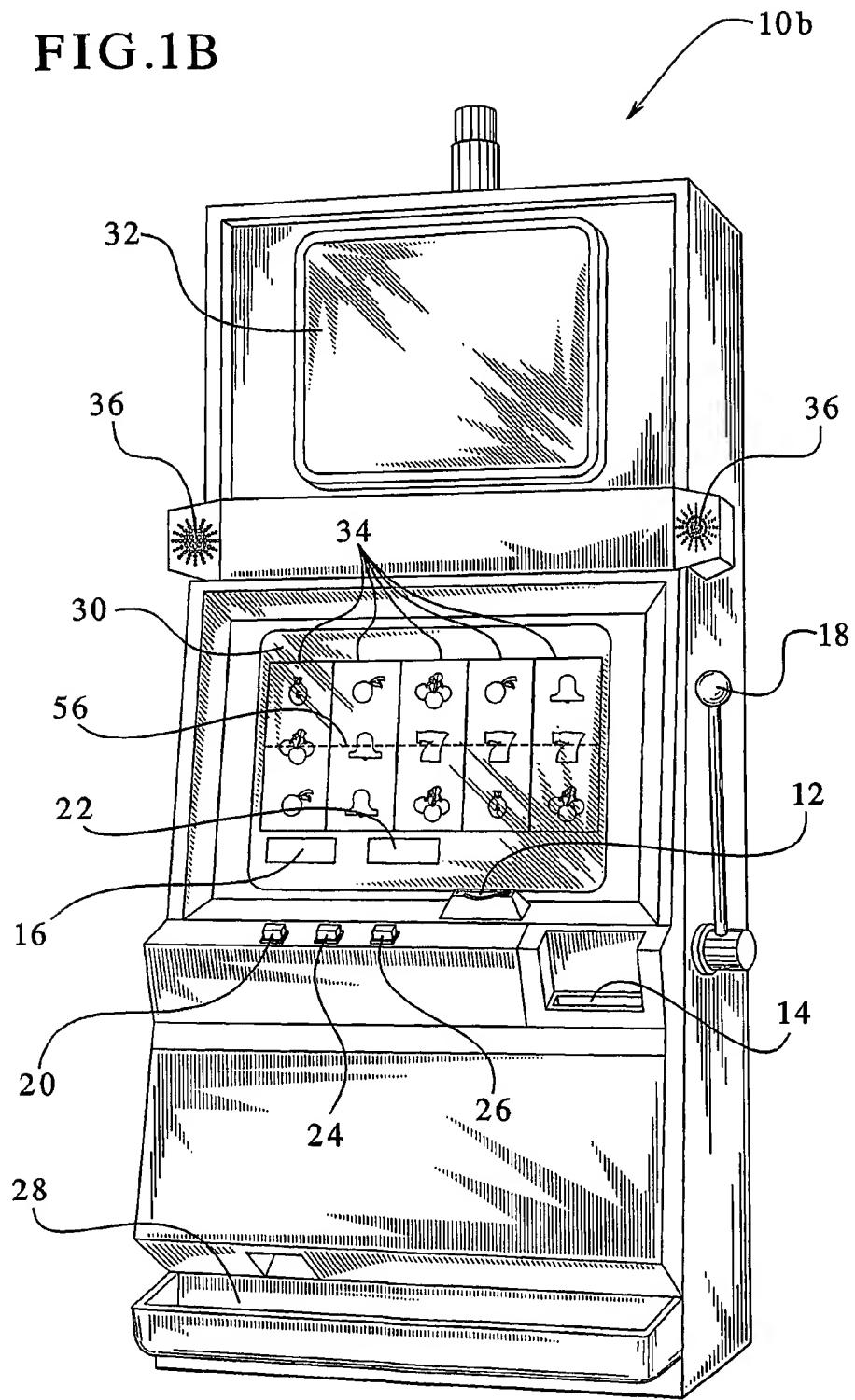
1/14

FIG.1A



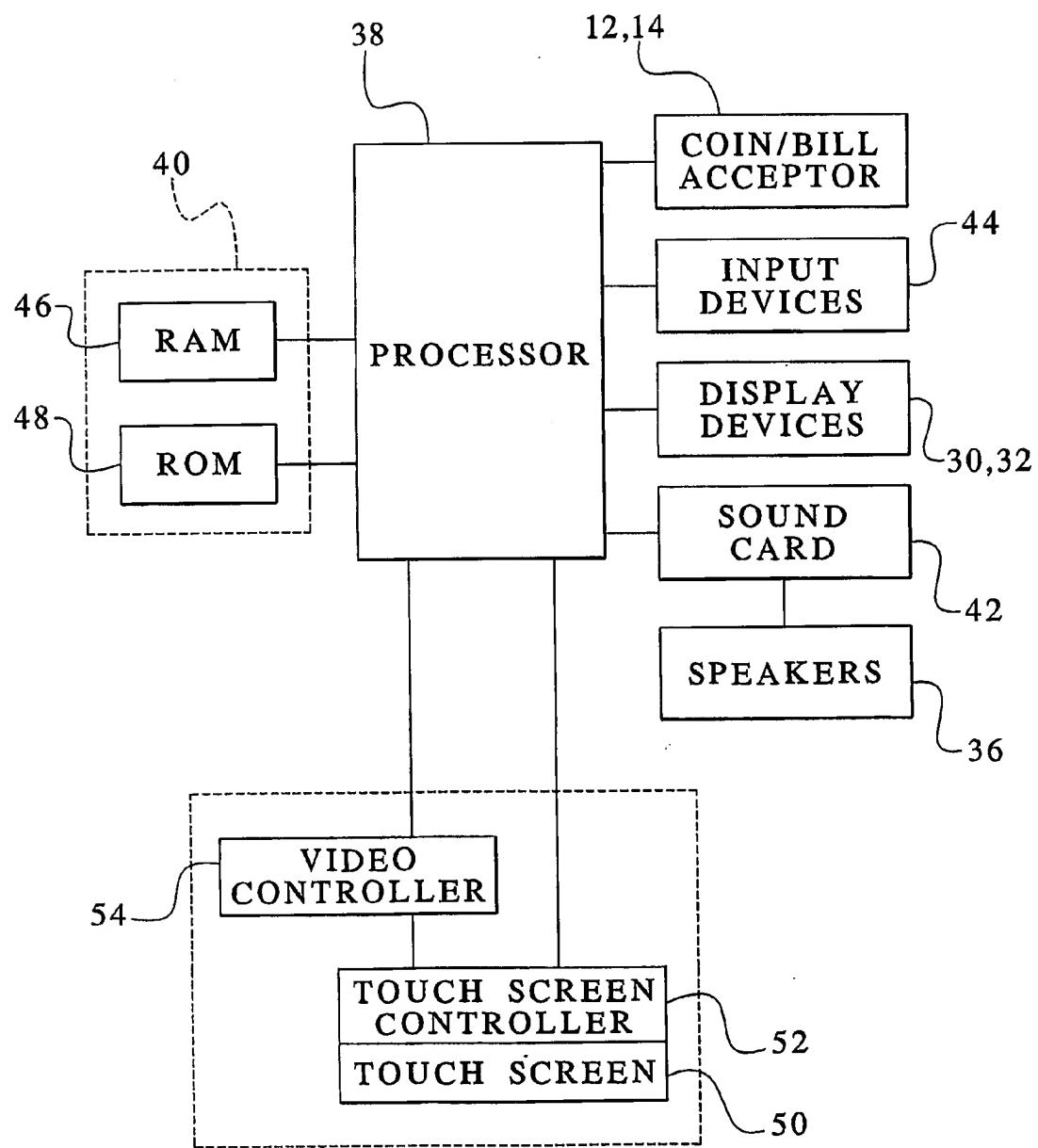
2/14

FIG.1B



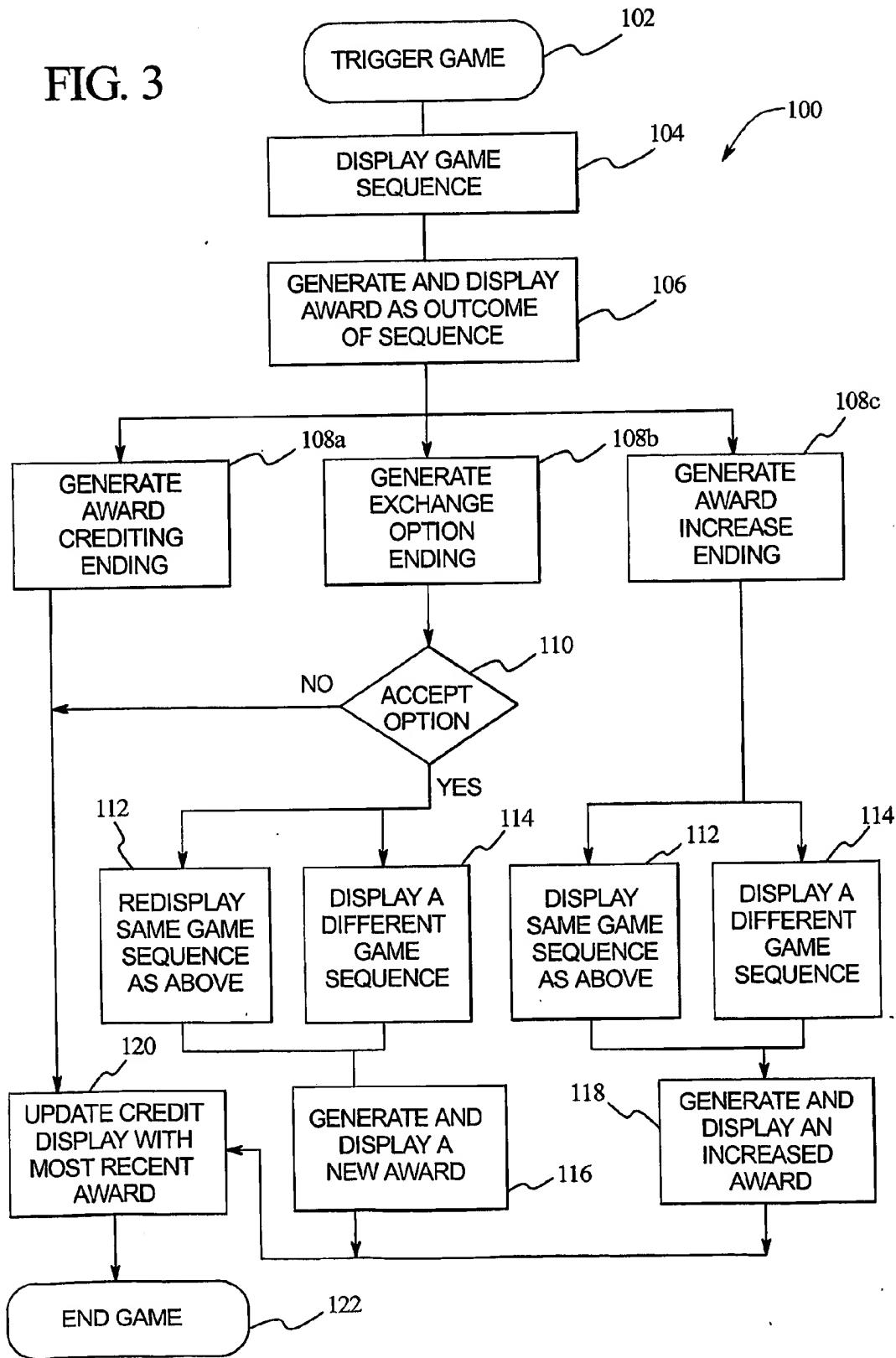
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FIG.2



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FIG. 3



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FIG. 4A

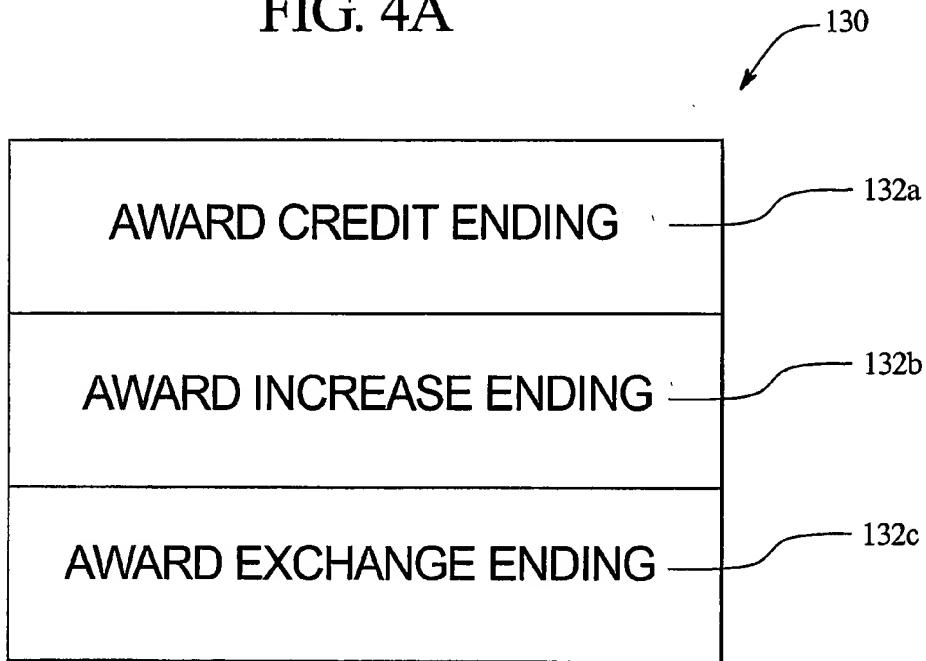


FIG. 4B

AWARD CREDIT ENDING	40%
AWARD INCREASE ENDING	30%
AWARD EXCHANGE ENDING	30%

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FIG.5A

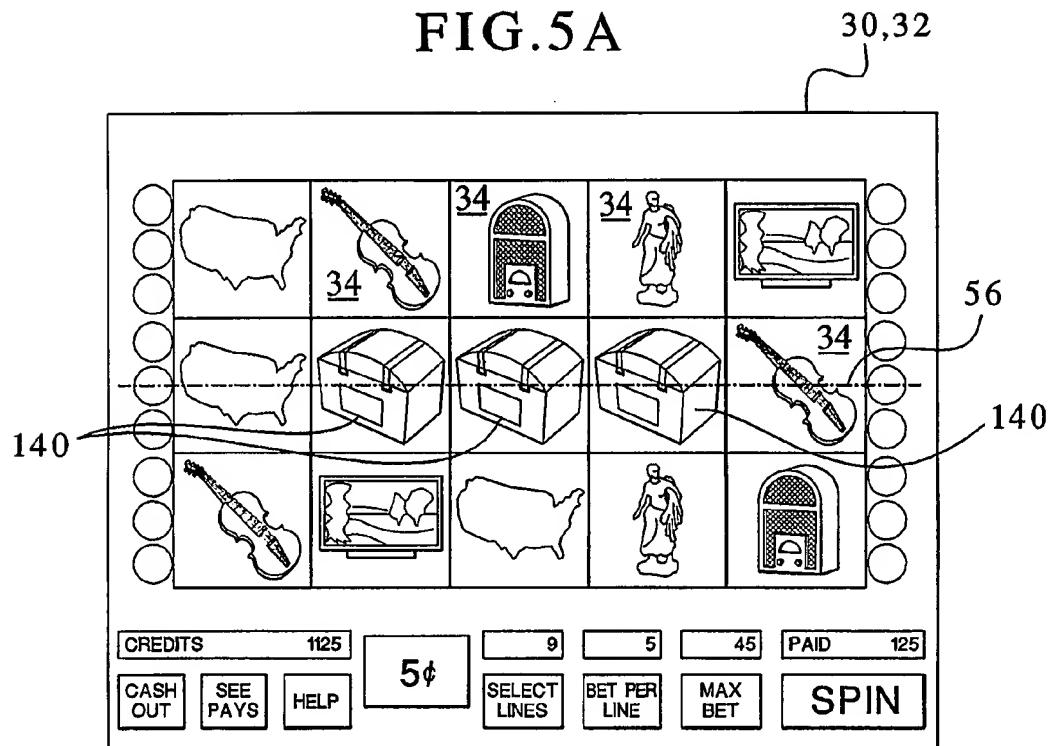
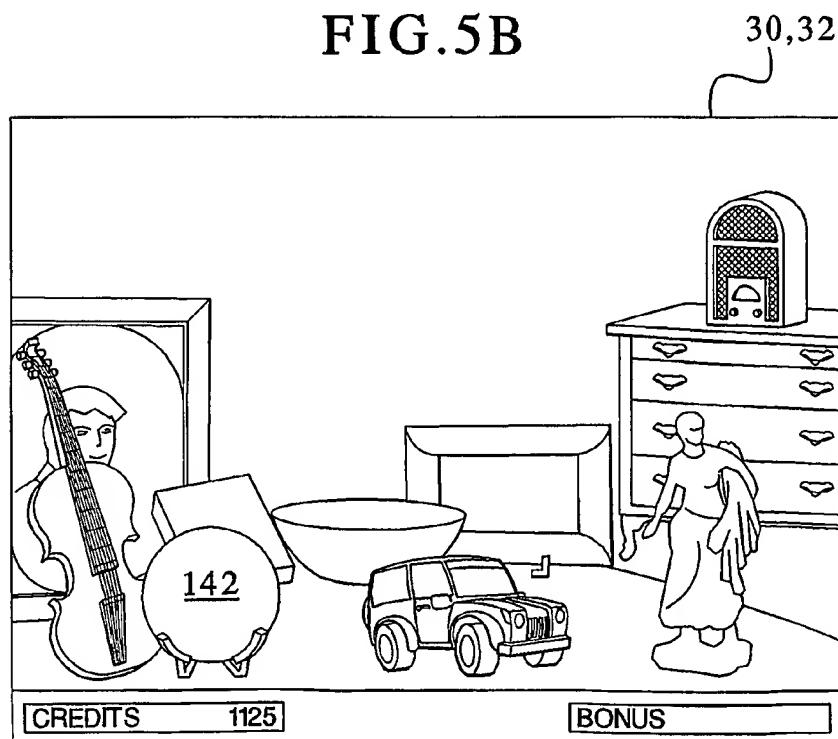


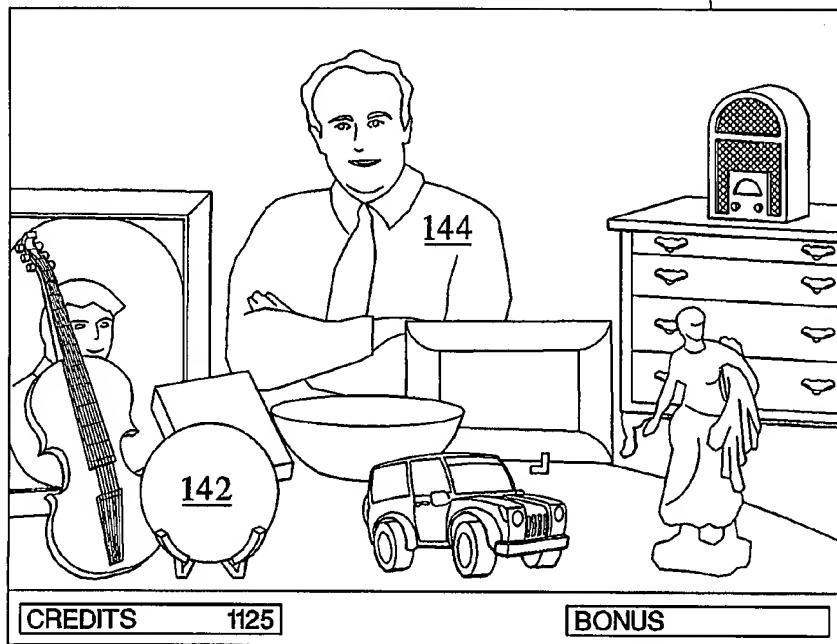
FIG.5B



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FIG.5C

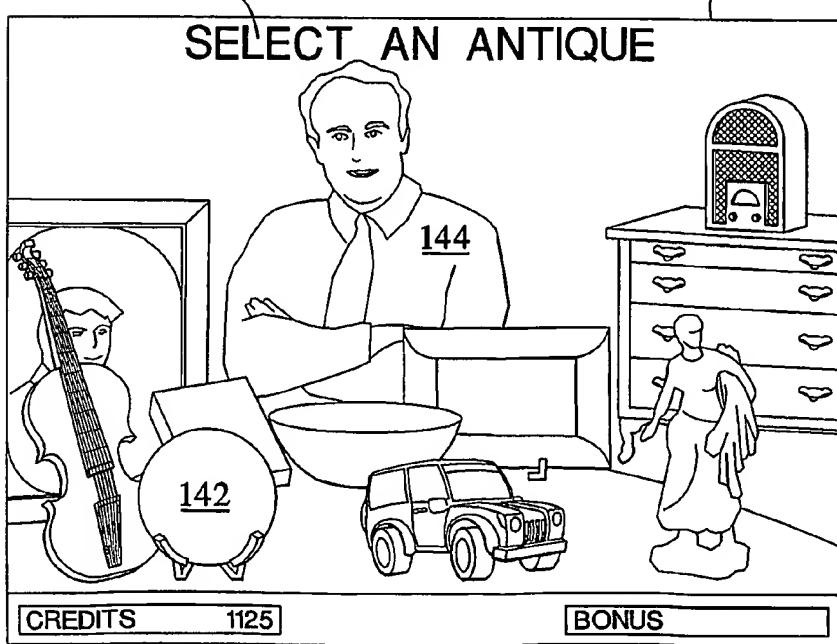
30,32



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FIG.5D

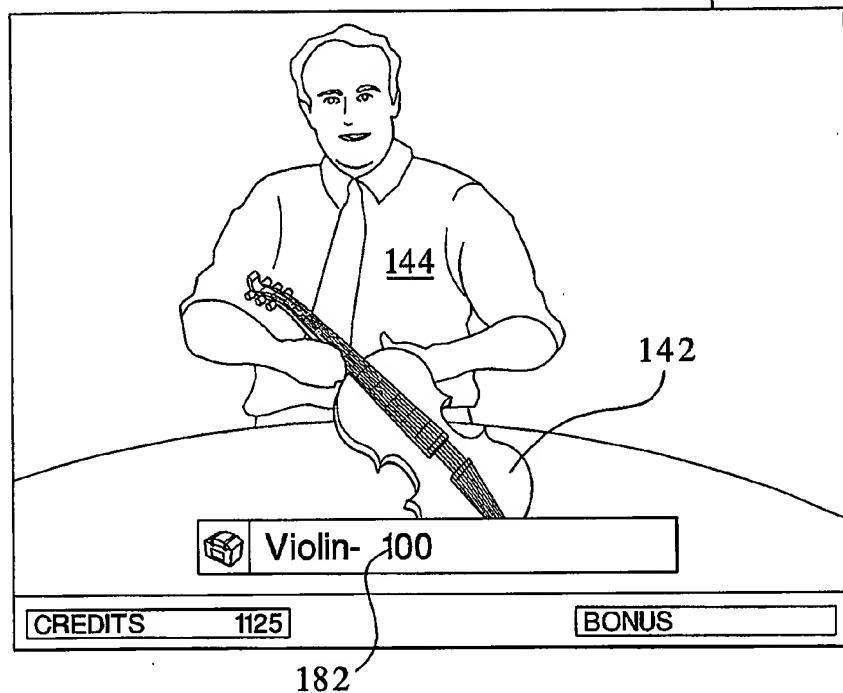
30,32



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FIG.5E

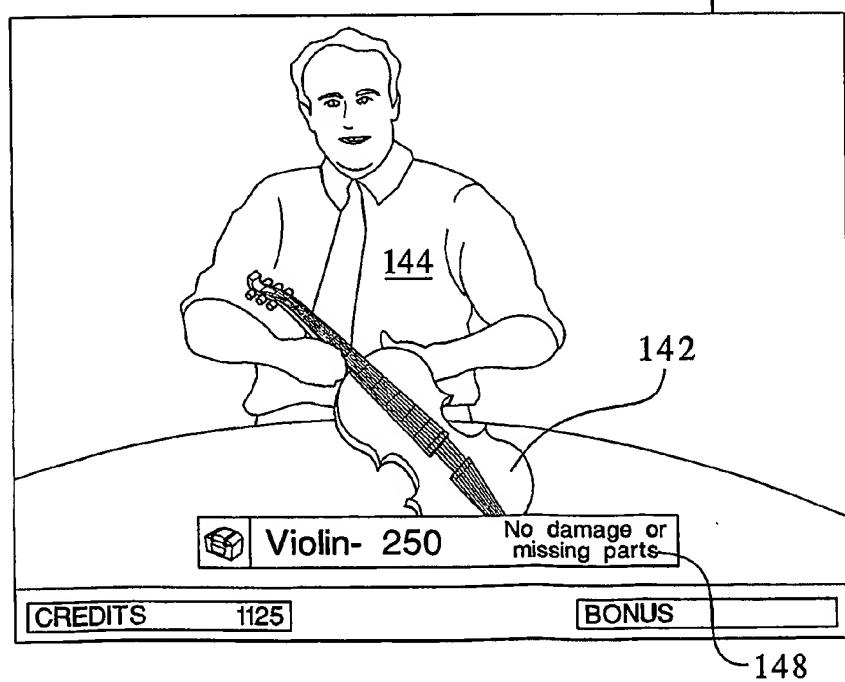
30,32



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FIG.5F

30,32



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FIG.5G

30,32

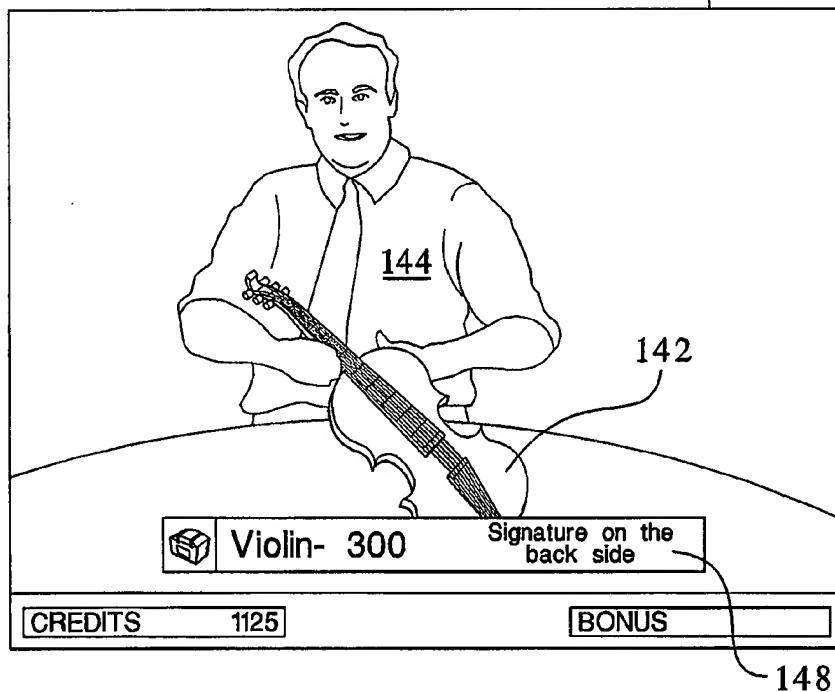
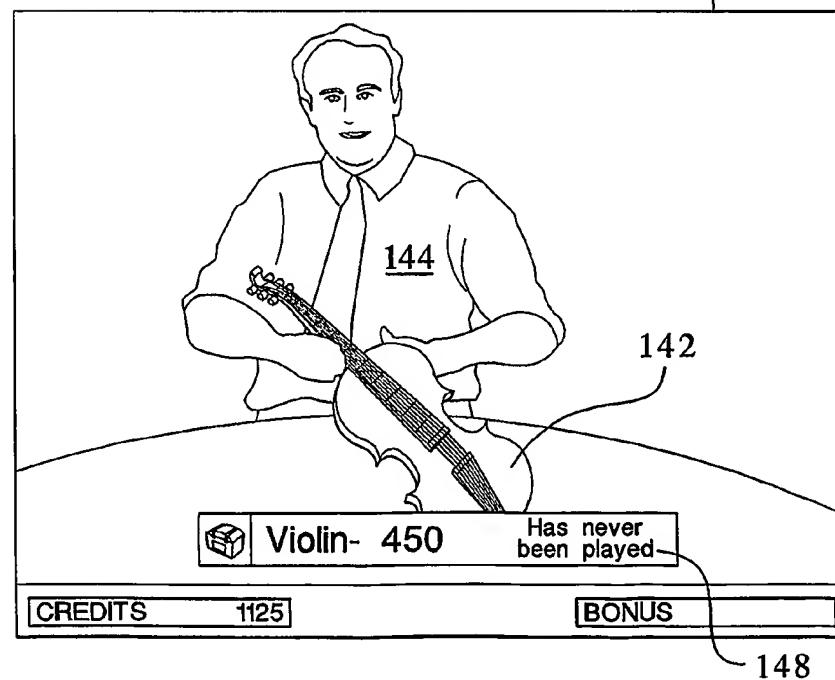


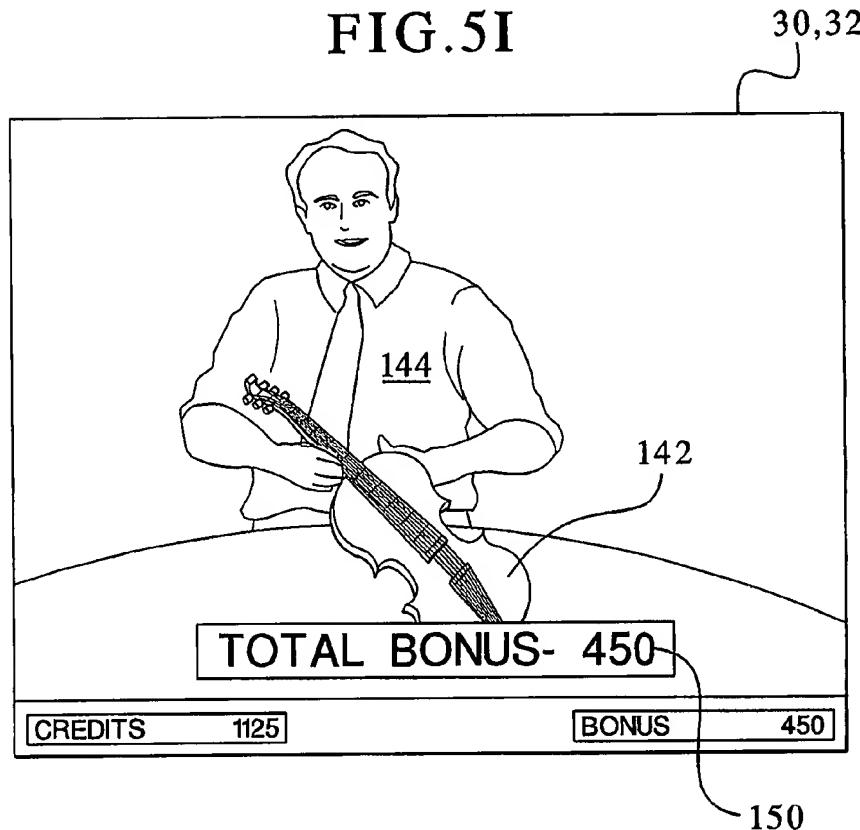
FIG.5H

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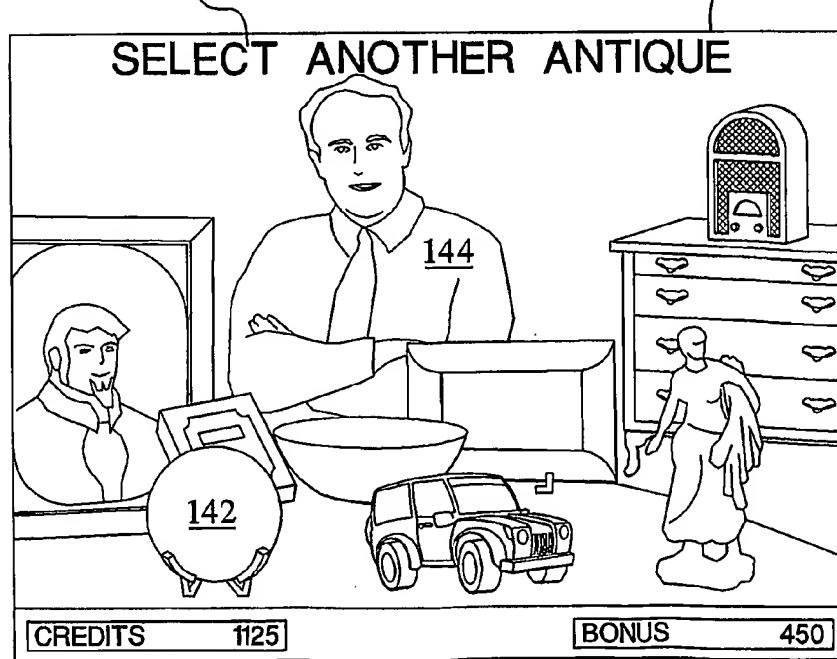
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FIG.5I



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FIG.6A



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FIG.6B

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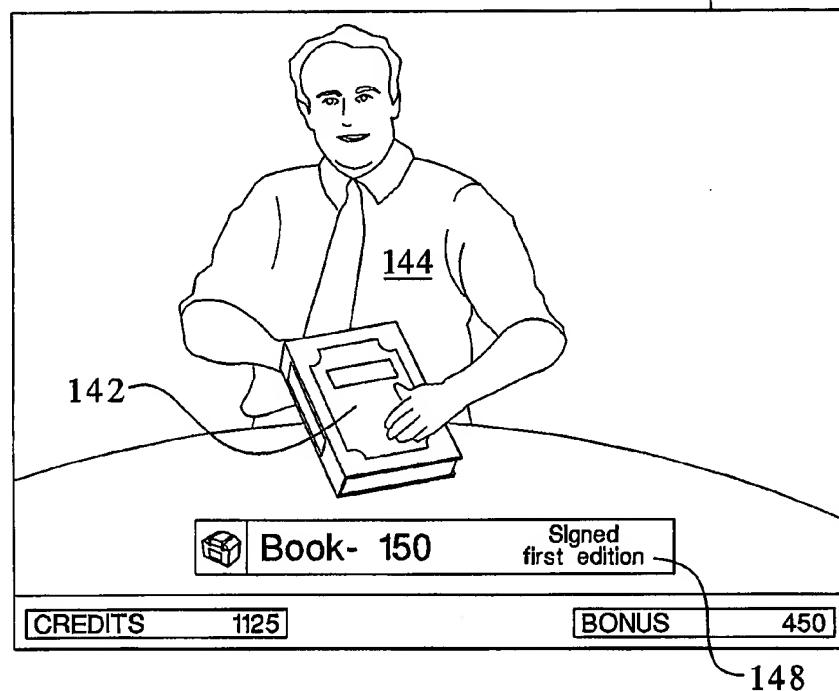
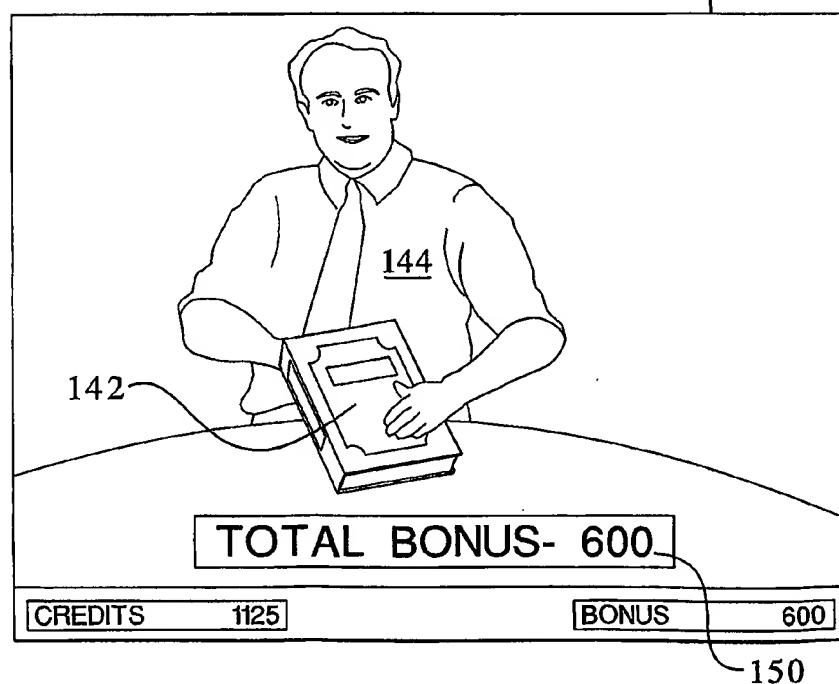


FIG.6C

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FIG.7A

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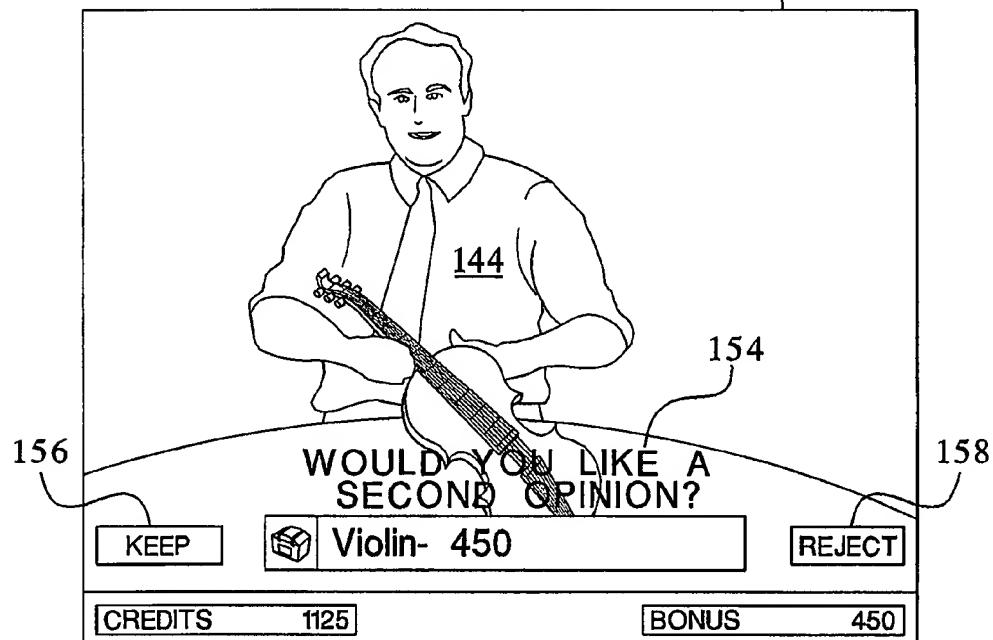
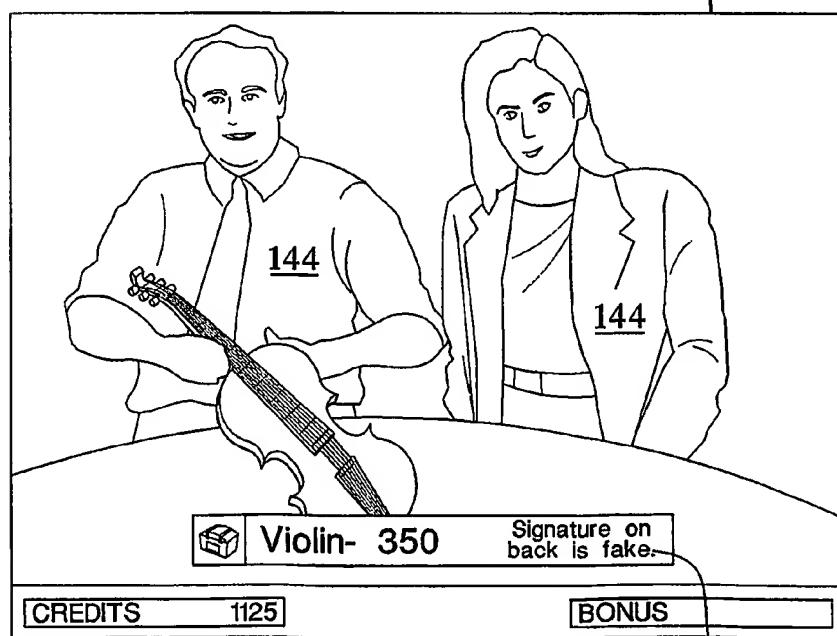


FIG.7B

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FIG.7C

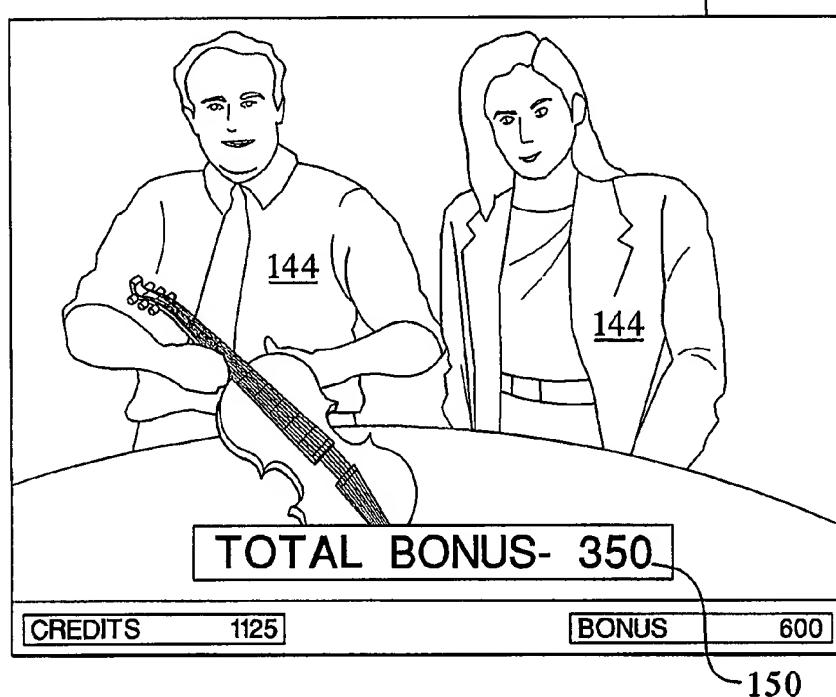
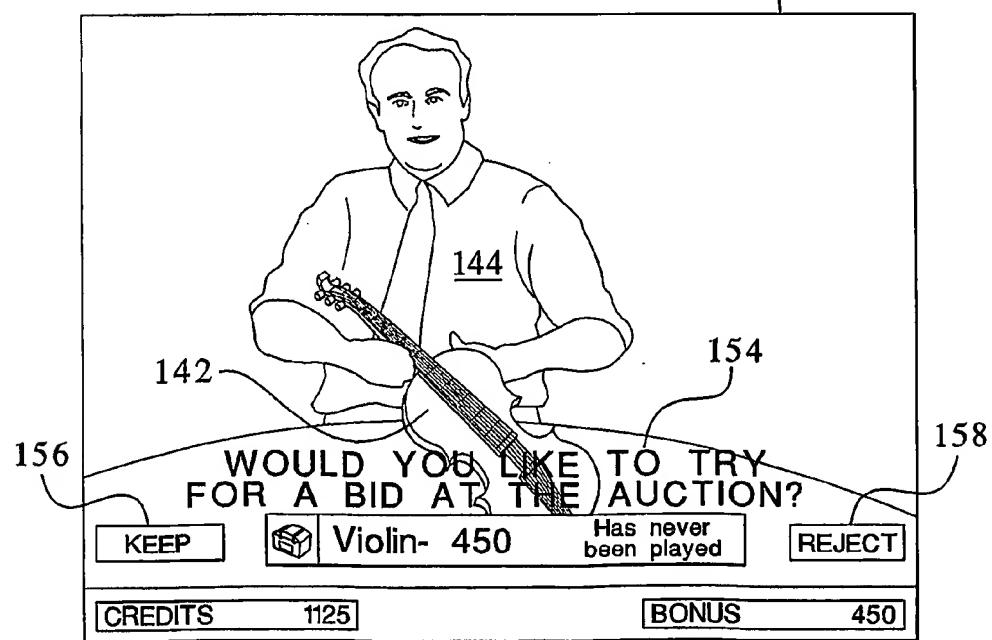


FIG.8A



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FIG.8B

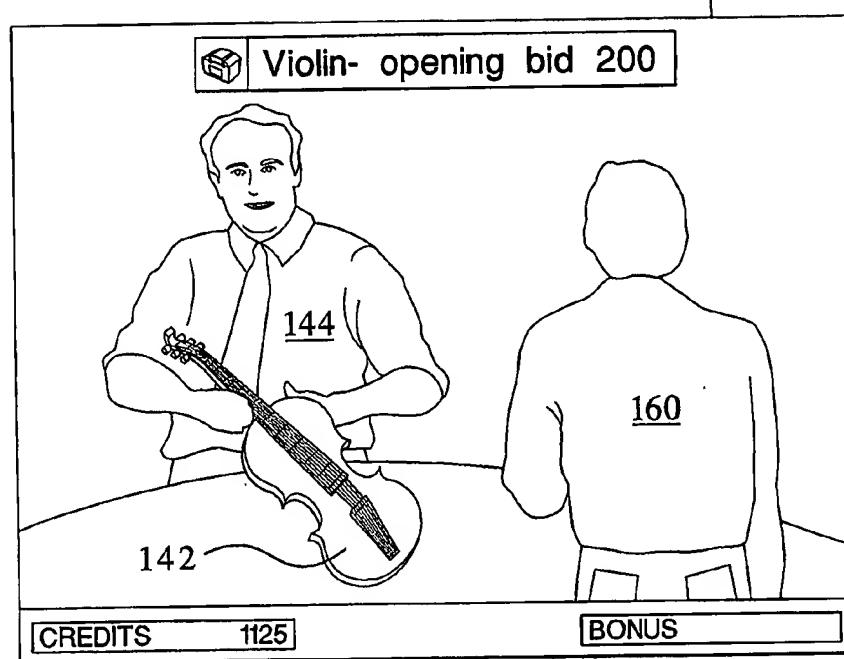
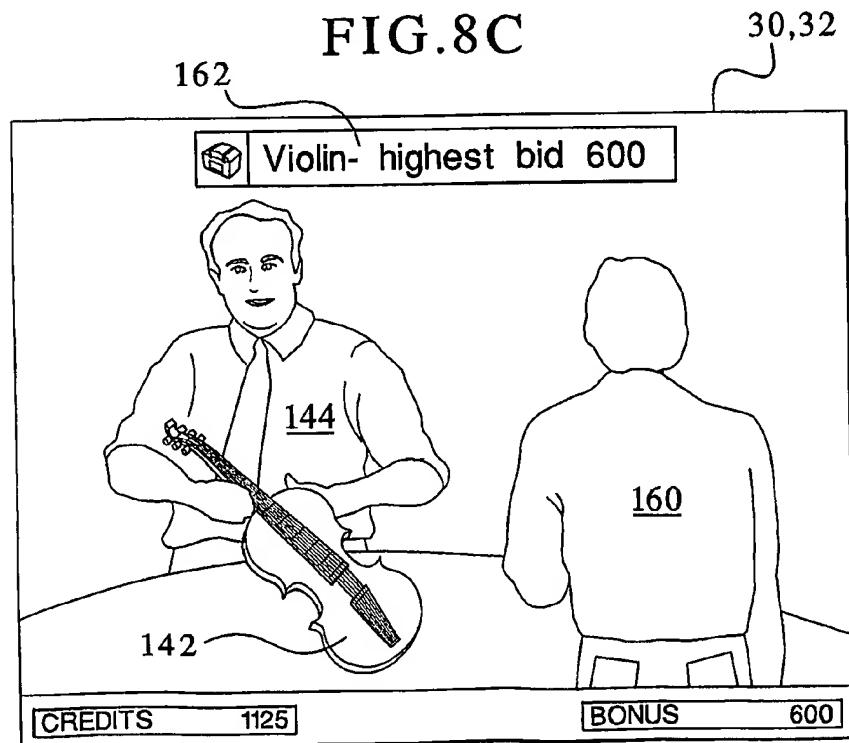


FIG.8C



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/US 03/16836

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC 7 G07F17/32

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 G07F

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	GB 2 366 435 A (IGT UK LTD) 6 March 2002 (2002-03-06) page 2, line 16 -page 5, line 10 page 8, line 12 -page 9, line 21 ---	1-22
X	US 6 322 309 B1 (THOMAS ALFRED ET AL) 27 November 2001 (2001-11-27) abstract column 2, line 10 - line 21 column 8, line 20 - line 40 column 9, line 15 - line 36 column 9, line 64 -column 10, line 65 figures 8,9 ---	1-22
X	US 6 347 996 B1 (CASEY MICHAEL P ET AL) 19 February 2002 (2002-02-19) the whole document ---	1-22 -/-

 Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C. Patent family members are listed in annex.

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- *X* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

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Date of the actual completion of the International search	Date of mailing of the International search report
20 October 2003	04/11/2003
Name and mailing address of the ISA European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016	Authorized officer Lavin Liermo, J

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
PCT/US 03/16836

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

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Information on patent family members

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